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Date: December 21, 2009

To: Parents and guardians of school-aged children in Rhode Island

From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH

Re: School-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine

Frequently Asked Questions About School-based Clinics For Second Doses of H1N1 Flu Vaccine

Question: Who should receive a second dose of H1N1 flu vaccine?

Answer: The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) recommends that all Rhode Island children who are older than 6 months of age but who are younger than 10 years of age receive second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine. Children who were younger than 10 years of age at the time of their first doses but who are 10 years of age now should also receive second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine.

Q: How will I know the date of my child's school-based clinic for second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine?

A: On January 4 HEALTH will post a schedule for school-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine on its website (www.health.ri.gov). This information will also be communicated to parents and guardians through the media and by the leaders of schools and school districts. The schedule will begin on January 11 and span four weeks.

Q: Are second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine important for younger children?

A: Yes. The second dose is a "booster shot." Many children who are younger than 10 years of age receive only partial immunity from first doses of H1N1 flu vaccine.

Q: When will school-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine take place?

A: The majority of school-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine will take place during late afternoon and early evening hours. The administrators of the few schools that will host daytime clinics will contact the parents and guardians of their students directly. Clinic times will also be posted on HEALTH's website.

Q: Will parents and guardians need to sign second consent forms for their children to receive second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine at school-based clinics?

A: No. The parents and guardians of children who were vaccinated at their first school-based H1N1 flu vaccination clinics will not need to sign and date additional consent forms.

Q: Can children who received first doses of H1N1 flu vaccine at locations other than school-based clinics receive second doses at school-based clinics?

A: Yes. The parents or guardians of children who did not attend first dose clinics but who will be attending second dose clinics will have to present signed and dated consent forms at their childrens' second dose clinics. These forms are available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese on HEALTH's website (www.health.ri.gov).

Q: Can children receive second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine from Rhode Island pediatricians and family physicians before their scheduled school-based clinics?

A: No. Children who are eligible to attend school-based clinics should generally not receive second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine from Rhode Island pediatricians and family physicians.

Q: When Rhode Island pharmacies have H1N1 flu vaccine, can children be vaccinated against H1N1 flu at these locations?

A: No. Rhode Island pharmacies are only able to vaccinate individuals who are 18 years of age and older.

Q: Can a child who received a first dose of H1N1 flu vaccine fewer than 21 days before his school's second dose clinic receive a second dose at that clinic?

A: No. Without a 21-day waiting period between doses, the booster is less effective.

Q: Where will children who attend kindergarten in preschool settings receive second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine?

A: Children who attend kindergarten in preschool settings should receive second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine from their pediatricians or family physicians. These same healthcare providers also provided children who attend kindergarten in preschool settings with their first doses of H1N1 flu vaccine.

Q: Where will home-schooled children receive second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine?

A: Home-schooled children will receive second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine in the public schools that they would otherwise attend. As they did before clinics for first doses of H1N1 flu vaccine, school district superintendents and school principals will contact the parents and guardians of the home-schooled children that will be vaccinated in their schools.

Q: Will HEALTH run a make-up clinic for children who missed their schools' clinics for second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine?

A: No. After the completion of school-based second dose clinics pediatricians and family physicians will administer second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine to children who missed their schools' second dose clinics.

Q: Will HEALTH run a clinic for second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine for school-aged children who attend out-of-state schools?

A: No. School-aged children who attend out-of-state schools can receive their second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine from their Rhode Island pediatricians and family physicians.

Q: I have additional questions. How can I contact HEALTH?

A: You can reach HEALTH by email at H1N1@health.ri.gov or by calling HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line (401-222-8022). Responders on this information line are prepared to answer questions in English and Spanish.